

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 PC-01 USIA-06 INR-07

DODE-00 AGR-05 INT-05 COME-00 EB-07 /119 W

----- 118926

R 190741Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0239
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BANJUL
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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PARIS FOR OECD/WILLIAMS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, XY, NG

SUBJECT: AFDROUGHT: CILSS MEETING IN NIAMEY

REF: NIAMEY 1024

1. FROM ALL REPORTS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN, AND WE ARE
STILL CHECKING, THIRD CILSS MEETING AT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
LEVEL IN NAIMEY MARCH 13 AND 14 WENT FAR BETTER THAN EXPECTED.
AT OUTSET, NIGERIEN HOSTS WERE APPREHENSIVE BECAUSE
THEY WERE NOT SURE WHETHER MALIANS AND UPPER VOLTANS WOULD SIT
DOWN TOGETHER OR WHETHER MALIANS WOULD PULL ANOTHER WALK-
OUT TO DETRIMENT OF AFRICAN REGIONAL IMAGE AND TO FURTHER
EMBARRASSMENT OF NIGER. THERE WAS ALSO CONSIDERABLE
DISCONTENT ABOUT REGIONAL COORDINATOR DAKOURE AND
HIS ALLEGED LACK OF INTEREST IN OR DIRECTION OF CILSS, WHICH IT
WAS FEARED MIGHT DEVELOP INTO MOVE TO OUST HIM FROM OFFICE.

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2. THIS DISSATISFACTION WITH CILSS WAS RELECTED IN PRESS STATEMENTS MADE BY DELEGATES ON ARRIVAL IN NAIMEY. GENERAL THRUST OF COMMENTS WAS EXPRESSION OF HOPE THAT CILSS WOULD BE FULLY REPRESENTED AT MEETING (DAKOURE DID NOT ATTEND BANJUL MEETING) AND THAT NIAMEY SESSION WOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH UNFINISHED BUSINESS LEFT OVER FROM PREVIOUS BANJUL GATHERING.

3. AT CEREMONIAL OPENING MARCH 13, VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT SANI SIDOU WELCOMED DELEGATBVULRU BEHALYIOF NIGER. IN BRIEF OPENING SPEECH HE CALLED ON COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO STRENGTHEN CILSS SO IT COULD ACHIEVE ITS BASIC MISSION OF REHABILITATION OF SAHEL. NIGER FOR ITS PART HAD COMMITTED SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES TO DROUGHT RECOVERY AND WITH HELP OF INTERNATIONAL DONORS HAD TURNED SITUATION AROUND. NIGERIENS WERE ONCE AGAIN BREATHING MORE EASILY AND FUTURE LOOKED BETTER. SANI SIDOU ALSO URGED DELEGATES TO FIND WAYS TO OVERCOME BOSTACLES IN CILSS WHICH HAD RPEVENTED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS ADOPTED BY CILSS AT OUAGADOUGOU AND BANJUL SESSIONS AND TO ENDOW CILSS WITH SENSE OF VITALITY WHICH IT NEEDED TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION.

4. WITH CEREMONIES OUT OF WAY, CILSS WENT INTO SERIES OF CLOSED MEETINGS. ONLY OUTSIDERS INVITED TO ADDRESS DELEGATIONS WERE DAC CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS AND UNSO REP MAGDI FROM OUAGADOUGOU BOTH OF WHOM SPOKE AFTERNOON MARCH14. ONLY PUBLIC ACCOUNTING OF PROCEEDINGS WAS COMMUNIQUE ISSUED MARCH 15 (REFTEL).

5. ALTHOUGH NONE OF PARTICIPANTS HAVE COMMENTED ON MEETING FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS AND INFORMATION ON DECISIONS HAVE SURFACED:

A) MEETING CAN BE CONSDIERED SUCCESS, MUCH TO EVERYONE'S RELIEF;

B) PARTICIPANTS AND ESPECIALLY NIGER WERE PLEASED THAT UPPER VOLTA AND MALI SAT DOWN TOGETHER AND STAYED TOGETHER AND THAT CEAO FIASCO IN NIAMEY WAS NOT REPEATED.

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C) COUNCIL OF MINISTERS REACHED DECISION TO KEEP PRESENT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IN CILSS WITH UPPER VOLTAN CHAIRMAN (DAKOURE) AND MALIAN SECRETARY GENERAL (KONATE) IN INTEREST OF REGIONAL SOLIDARITY AND TO PROMOTE BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. DAKOURE WAS IN EFFECT ASKED TO STAY ON. NIGER HAD CANDIDATE BUT HELD BACK.

BAL IN ZHBGISING DAKOUREJWSVCONTINUED LEADERSHIP OF

CILSS, COUNCIL OF MINISTERS PRIVATELY ASKED DAKOURE TO SPEND
MORE TIME ON CILSS AFFIARS AND HE REPORTEDLY AGREED.

E) PARTICIPANTS WERE ENCOURAGED BY REPORTS THAT UPPER
VOLTAN AND MALI DELEGATIONS HAD MET PRIVATELY LATE INTO NIGHT
MARCH 14 OVER BOTTLE OF SCOTCH TO TALK ABOUT THEIR MAUTUAL
PROBLEMS. NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT TRANSPRIRED, BUT FACT
BOTHTIIDZJNGKERGED FROM SESSION SMILING TAKEN AS HOPEFUL SVBN.

6. COMMENT ON DAC CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS PRESENTMON OF CILSS FOLLOWS IN
SPETEL.

7. COMMENT: NIAMEY MEETING OF CILSS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN
DOMINATED MORE BY POLITICAL THAN ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS BUT
NET EFFECT MAY HAVE BEEN TO INSTILL NEW LIFE INTO ORGANIZATION
AND TO GIVE DAKTRE NEW LEASE TO GET ON WITH CILSS BUSINESS.
WE HAVYY EEN NOTHING TO SUGGEST THAT CILSS IS BETTER
EQUIPPED ECONOMICALLY TO DEAL WITH ITS MISSION OF REHABILITATION
OF SAHEL AS RESULT OF ANY DECISIOU TAKEN AT NIAMEY BUT SESSION'S
SUCCESS IN OVZNCTING POLITICAL PROBLEMS THAT LOOMED LARGE AT
OUTSET HAS GIVEN PARTICIPANTS SENSE OF PRIDE IN MAINTAINING
REGIONAL HARMONY AND GREATER STAKE IN CILSS AS REGIONAL KGANIZA-
TION WITH WHICH ALL MEMBERS PREPARED COOPERATE.HECK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, AFDROUGHT, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NIAMEY01033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750096-0453
From: NIAMEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750336/aaaabgnv.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NIAMEY 1024
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <14 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFDROUGHT: CILSS MEETING IN NIAMEY
TAGS: EAID, XY, NG, CILSS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006